

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 03815 310937Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----310939Z 002272 /17
O 310851Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6398

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3815

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MO, IS
SUBJECT: CHAIRMAN OF WORLD CONGRESS OF NORTH AFRICAN JEWS TO VISIT
MOROCCO

REF: A. CASABLANCA 477
B. TEL AVIV 827

1. SHAUL BEN-SIMHON, CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD CONGRESS OF NORTH AFRICAN JEWS, LEADER OF THE MOROCCAN IMMIGRANTS' ASSOCIATION IN ISRAEL, AND MEMBER OF THE HISTADRUT EXECUTIVE BUREAU, INFORMED EMBOFF THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A PERSONAL INVITATION FROM PRIME MINISTER ACHMED OSMAN TO VISIT MOROCCO. HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD THE APPROVAL OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT (RABIN AND PERES) FOR THIS TRIP AND SAID THAT HE IS DEPARTING MAY 31 VIA PARIS, WHERE HE WILL OBTAIN THE NECESSARY TRAVEL DOCUMENTS; HE PLANS TO ARRIVE IN RABAT EVENING OF MAY 31.

2. BEN-SIMHON EXPLAINED THAT THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT HAD INFORMED HIM SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT HE WOULD BE RECEIVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER ANYTIME HE WISHED TO COME TO MOROCCO. HOWEVER, HE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR AN EXPLICIT INVITATION, WHICH HE HAS NOW RECEIVED.

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3. BEN-SIMHON WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH AMBASSADOR ANDERSON JUNE 1 TO EXPLAIN HIS MISSION, AND SAID HE WOULD CALL TO SEE IF AN APPOINTMENT IS POSSIBLE. HE WILL ALSO ASK IF THE EMBASSY COULD DISCREETLY INQUIRE ABOUT AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING. HE PLANS TO MEET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND WITH LEADERS OF THE JEWISH

COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THIS WEEK'S ELECTIONS AND WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS THE "POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES" IN MOROCCO, AND BECAUSE OF HIS OWN STATUS, HE FEELS THAT AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING WOULD MAKE HIS MISSION MORE FRUITFUL.

4. BEN-SIMHON INDICATED TO EMBOFF THAT HIS PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE IS CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND ACCESS TO DOCUMENTARY SOURCES ON JEWISH HISTORY IN THE MAGHREB, WHICH HE CLAIMS ARE IN POSSESSION OF THE KING AND SEVERAL ROYAL MOROCCAN INSTITUTES.

5. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY, BEN-SIMHON FEELS THAT HIS TRIP WILL ENHANCE HIS PERSONAL POSITION WITHIN THE MOROCCAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL AND THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF WHICH HE IS CHAIRMAN. SINCE HE HAD LOST HIS CHANCE TO BECOME A LABOR MEMBER IN THE KNESSET IN THE RECENT ELECTION AND SINCE MOST OF THE MOROCCAN JEWISH COMMUNITY VOTED FOR LIKUD, HE BELIEVES THAT PERSONAL LINKS WITH MOROCCO MIGHT SHORE UP HIS CHANCES FOR A POLITICAL COMEBACK. THIS HAS BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM SINCE HE IS AWARE THT ISRAELI JOURNALIST AMOS KENAN AND MK LOVA ELIAV (BOTH DOVES, IN CONTRAST TO BEN-SIMHON) HAD ALREADY VISITED MOROCCO. BEN-SIMHON BELONGS TO THE RAFI FACTION OF THE LABOR PARTY AND HAS BEEN CLOSE TO PERES AND DAYAN. HE HAS BEEN A GOOD CONTACT OF THIS EMBASSY.

LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV03815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770192-1207
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977051/aaaaaake.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 CASABLANCA 477, 77 TEL AVIV 827
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2311686
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHAIRMAN OF WORLD CONGRESS OF NORTH AFRICAN JEWS TO VISIT MOROCCO
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, OVIP, MO, IS, (BEN-SIMHON, SHAUL)
To: RABAT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7020c486-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009